

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 2744

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MX, CU
SUBJECT: CASTRO CANCELS PLAN TO VISIT MEXICO

REF: A. MEXICO 0735 B. MEXICO 1121

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR JOVA

1. PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA THIS EVENING SENT FERNANDO GUTIERREZ BARRIOS (SECRETARIAT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL WHOM HE SENDS TO SEE ME WITH SPECIAL MESSAGES) TO INFORM ME OF CASTRO CANCELLATION AND ON VISIT OF PLO REPRESENTATIVES (SEPTEL). FIDEL CASTRO SENT BRIEF MESSAGE TO ECHEVERRIA THROUGH CUBAN AMBASSADOR LOPEZ MUINO REGRETTING THAT HE COULD NOT VISIT MEXICO (VISIT WAS REPORTEDLY TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH) BECAUSE HE WOULD BE ATTENDING COMMUNIST PARTIES MEETING IN MOSCOW AND ALSO BECAUSE OF SITUATION IN AFRICA (WITHOUT DIRECTLY MENTIONING ANGOLA).

2. MEXICANS SPECULATE (PER GUTIERREZ BARRIOS) THAT CASTRO'S DECISION NOT TO VISIT WAS TRIGGERED BY TWO RECENT COMMENTS CRITICAL OF INTERVENTION MADE BY ECHEVERRIA: ONCE AT DIPLOMATIC CORPS LUNCHEON FOR PRESIDENT AND AGAIN AT ECHEVERRIA/ TRUDEAU PRESS CONFERENCE (SEE REFTELS) WHEN ECHEVERRIA SAID HE WISHED NO ONE WOULD INTERVENE IN ANGOLA. (HE DID NOT REFER DIRECTLY TO CUBA ON EITHER OCCASION.)

3. ECHEVERRIA IS PLEASED WITH CASTRO DECISION NOT TO VISIT.

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THE VISIT WOULD "BE DIFFICULT" FOR MEXICO. THE "SITUATION

HAS CHANGED" IN PAST SIX MONTHS (SINCE ECHEVERRIA EXTENDED INVITATION). ECHEVERRIA BELIEVES CUBAN INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA IS "TURNING WORLD OPINION AGAINST CUBA".

4. ECHEVERRIA IS SENDING GUTIERREZ BARRIOS TO HAVANNA TOMORROW FOR BRIEF (36 HOUR) STAY, TO EXPRESS ACCEPTANCE OF CASTRO'S DECISION, EXPRESS POLITE REGRETS, AND DELIVER PRESIDENTIAL GIFTS (ART BOOKS ETC). GUTIERREZ BARRIOS WILL NOT RPT NOT MAKE ANY EFFORT TO INDUCE CASTRO TO CHANGE HIS DECISION.
JOVA

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